

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5844 of August 4, 1988

Thanksgiving Day, 1988

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

The celebration of Thanksgiving Day is one of our Nation's most venerable and cherished traditions. Almost 200 years ago, the first President of these United States, George Washington, issued the first national Thanksgiving Day Proclamation under the Constitution and recommended to the American people that they "be devoted to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be." He called upon them to raise "prayers and supplications to the Great Lord and Ruler of Nations," not merely for continued blessings on our own land but on all rulers and nations that they might know "good government, peace, and concord."

A century ago, President Grover Cleveland called for "prayers and song of praise" that would render to God the appreciation of the American people for His mercy and for the abundant harvests and rich rewards He had bestowed upon our Nation through the labor of its farmers, shopkeepers, and tradesmen. Both of these Proclamations included something else as well: a recognition of our shortcomings and transgressions and our dependence, in total and in every particular, on the forgiveness and forbearance of the Almighty.

Today, cognizant of our American heritage of freedom and opportunity, we are again called to gratitude, thanksgiving, and contrition. Thanksgiving Day summons every American to pause in the midst of activity, however necessary and valuable, to give simple and humble thanks to God. This gracious gratitude is the "service" of which Washington spoke. It is a service that opens our hearts to one another as members of a single family gathered around the bounteous table of God's Creation. The images of the Thanksgiving celebrations at America's earliest settlement—of Pilgrim and Iroquois Confederacy assembled in festive friendship—resonate with even greater power in our own day. People from every race, culture, and creed on the face of the Earth now inhabit this land. Their presence illuminates the basic yearning for freedom, peace, and prosperity that has always been the spirit of the New World.

In this year when we as a people enjoy the fruits of economic growth and international cooperation, let us take time both to remember the sacrifices that have made this harvest possible and the needs of those who do not fully partake of its benefits. The wonder of our agricultural abundance must be recalled as the work of farmers who, under the best and worst of conditions, give their all to raise food upon the land. The gratitude that fills our being must be tempered with compassion for the needy. The blessings that are ours must be understood as the

gift of a loving God Whose greatest gift is healing. Let us join then, with the psalmist of old:

O give thanks to the Lord, call on His name,
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing praises to Him,
Tell of all His wonderful works!
Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 24, 1988, as a National Day of Thanksgiving, and I call upon the citizens of this great Nation to gather together in homes and places of worship on that day of thanks to affirm by their prayers and their gratitude the many blessings God has bestowed upon us.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5845 of August 9, 1988

National Neighborhood Crime Watch Day, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Last year, crime left its mark on one in four American homes, a sobering reminder that, despite recent heartening progress against criminals and the causes of crime, particularly drug abuse, much remains to be done to ensure for ourselves and our children the safety of our homes, our neighborhoods, and our communities. It is an unfortunate fact that the scourge of crime continues to occupy the head of the list of national problems crying out for immediate action.

Those who have experienced the pain, the loss, the sense of violation and frustration that accompany crime know that defeating it requires more than tougher laws and surer punishments—though tougher and surer they are. Truly effective law enforcement demands our reliance on one of our great historical strengths as a Nation: the willingness of our people to band freely together, in local communities, in defense of lives, homes, and property.

Local crime watch committees, in cooperation with law enforcement officers and the appropriate government agencies, can make a real difference in crime rates. As McGruff the anti-crime dog, the familiar national symbol of crime prevention, would put it: They take a bite out of crime. But the benefits of such citizen groups do not stop there: Their work teaches children respect for law, reinforces community values, and encourages the kind of individual responsibility that makes for healthy, creative neighborhoods peopled by safer and happier citizens.

The growth of these committees is truly encouraging. Today over 19 million Americans participate in neighborhood watch programs, keep-